

Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

RSR-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 IO-12 DPW-01 OMB-01

/107 W

----- 022743

O R 241025 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2133

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

CINCPAC

USDAO SAIGON

USDEL JEC PARIS

USSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 9183

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, VS

SUBJECT: ICCS INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED US BOMBING IN LOC NINH AREA

1. SUMMARY: VOICE OF AMERICA CORRESPONDENT PETER COLLINS ACCOMPANIED MAY 23 ICCS INVESTIGATORS TO SITES OF ALLEGED US BOMBING IN LOC NINH AREA. COLLINS REPORTS THAT EVIDENCE PRESENTED IN SUPPORT OF VIET CONG ALLEGATIONS WAS " LUDICROUS" BUT, DESPITE THIS, POLDEL/ HUNGDEL SEEMED EAGER TO SUPPORT VC CHARGES. CANDEL AND PROBABLY INDODEL, SAID COLLINS, WILL DISMISS VIET CONG COMPLAINT. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAY 23 VOA CORRESPONDENT PETER COLLINS AND TWO OTHER MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES FLEW WITH AN ICCS TEAM FROM BIEN HOA TO LOC NINH WHERE THE TEAM WAS TO INVESTIGATE VIET CONG
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ALLEGATIONS OF US BOMBING ON MAY 12-13. AT LOC NINH THE GROUP, INCLUDING TWO GVN TPJMC LIAISON OFFICERS, WAS MET BY VIET CONG REPRESENTATIVES AND TRANSPORTED IN 12 CHICOM- BUILT JEEPS TO WHAT WAS APPARENTLY DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS (FORMERLY A FRENCH PLANTER' S RESIDENCE). VIET CONG OBJECTED TO GVN LIAISON OFFICERS ACCOMPANYING TEAM ON INVESTIGATION AND THEY WERE SUPPORTED BY POLGARIANS WHO NOTED THAT, SICNE ICCS TEAM NOW IN " LIBERATED AREA", THE " PRG" MADE THE RULES. CANDEL PROTESTED EXCLUSION OF GVN OFFICERS, EVENTUALLY RELENTING BUT STATING THAT CANDEL WOULD INSERT IN REPORT OF INVESTIGATION LANGUAGE TO THE EFFECT THAT VIET CONG HAD VIOLATED PARIS AGREE- MENT BY ITS REFUSAL TO ALLOW GVN REPRESENTATIVES TO WITNESS INVESTIGATION.

3. THE GROUP, MINUS GVN LIAISON OFFICERS, LEFT THE PRESUMED DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS:. SKIRTED THE TOWN OF LOC NINH AND PROCEEDED APPROXIMATELY 18 KILOMETERS UP HIGHWAY 13 TO THE SITE OF THE FIRST ALLEGED VIOLATION. COLLINS FIXED THE LOCATION AT XU 714182, ABOUT EIGHT KILOMETERS BY AIR FROM LOC NINH, AND SIX KILOMETERS SOUTH OF THE CAMBODIAN BORDER. AT THIS SITE US AIRCRAFT HAD ALLEGEDLY DESTROYED A SOVIET- BUILT THREE- QUARTER TON TRUCK. ACCORDING TO COLLINS TRUCK HAD NO DOUBT BEEN DESTROYED, PROBABLY AT THAT SITE, AND PROBABLY BY AIRCRAFT, GUT THE FACT THAT BODY OF VEHICLE AND EXPOSED MECHANICAL PARTS COVERED WITH SUBSTANTIAL RUST SUGGESTS STRONGLY THAT DESTRUCTION WAS A GOOD DEAL MORE THAN TWO WEEK OLD. ONE INDODEL TOLD COLLINS THAT CLUTCH PEDAL WAS COMPLETELY INOPERATIVE DUE TO RUST. COMMUNISTS PRODUCED MAN WHO THEY SAID WAS DRIVER OF TRUCK AND WHO, SAID COLLINS, WOULD HAVE TO HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY FORTUNATE TO SURVIVE ATTACK ON TRUCK. DRIVER AVERRED THAT PRIOR TO DESTRUCTION OF TRUCK HE HAD BEEN " CHASED" DOWN ROAD BY A TWO- ENGINE, SWEEP- WING, JET AIRCRAFT WHICH MADE SOME FIVE STRAFING RUNS ON HIM. COLLINS NOTED THAT THE INTERPRETER, SUPPLIED BY THE VIET CONG ELEMENT TO THE TPJMC, WAS ZEALOUS TO THE POINT OF PROMPTING THE " WITNESS."

4. AFTER VIEWING TRUCK ICCS TEAM WAS LED TO TWO BOMB CRATERS ON NORTH SIDE OF ROAD WHICH WERE ALLEGEDLY CREATED DURING ATTACK ON TRUCK. COLLINS SAID THAT THE CRATERS APPEARED TO BE ONE AND ONE- HALF TO TWO YEARS OLD, A JUDGEMENT HE BASED ON FACT THAT THEY WERE WELL FILLED IN AND GRASS WAS GROWING

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INSIDE. AT THIS POINT CANDEL AND INDODEL WERE INCREASINGLY ANNOYED BY THE VIET CONG' S INABILITY TO COME UP WITH MORE CREDIBLE EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THEIR CHARGES. THE TWO DELEGATIONS DECLINED TO OBSERVE TWO MORE CRATERS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD BUT, PREDICTABLY, POLGARIANS WERE ANXIOUS TO VIEW THIS ADDITIONAL " EVIDENCE" AND, ALONG WITH COLLINS, ACCOMPANIED THE VIET CONG ESCORTS ACROSS HIGHWAY 13. THESE

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ACTION EA-04

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-07 H-03 NSC-07 AID-01 RSR-01 RSC-01

SSO-00 NSCE-00 /025 W
----- 022709

O 241015 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2119

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 9183

EDEN ROC HOTEL (SEE TOAID A-2870, 10/30/72) INVOLVING VN\$80
MILLION AND ALPHA FILM INVOLVING POSSIBLE VN\$16 MILLION
SEIZURE/ SALE SETTLEMENT. OUTSTANDING BALANCE OF VN\$ 6 BILLION
IN BACK TAXES EXPECTED TO BE CUT IN HALF DURING 1973. EXPECT
NEW LAND TAX DECGXED LATE 1972 WILL PRODUCE VN\$13 BILLION
DURING 1974 WHEN FULL EFFECT REALIZED. NOTE THAT PREVIOUS LAW
HAD NO PROVISIONS FOR PENALTY OR PROSECUTION FOR INCOME TAX
EVASION , WHILE NEW LAW DOES.

17. CONCUR.

18. MISSION HAS NO PLANS REQUEST ADDITIONAL AID BEYOND
\$40 MILLION CIP AGREED IN 1969.

19. MISSION PARTICIPATED 1970 AID/ W SPRING REVIEW OF LAND REFORM AND
MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL MISSION CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS,
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS. PHILIPPINES DELEGATION VISITED GVN IN
FALL 1972 FOR COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION/ OBSERVATION PROGRAM.
USAID VN AND USAID PHILIPPINES STAFF HAVE EXCHANGED VISITS AND
TDY ASSIGNMENTS, INCLUDING SENIOR USIAD/ VN ADVISOR WHO WAS ONE
OF PRINCIPAL ARCHITECTS OF GVN PROGRAM.

20. SPETEL FOLLOWS IN RESPONSE STATE 097097.

21. FORM AND NATURE OF U. S. AID ARE WIDELY KNOWN TO LOCAL
POPULACE, ESPECIALLY IN SUCH FIELDS AS REFUGEES, HEALTH,
EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURE.

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22. MUST AWAIT RECEIPT REPORT BEFORE PROVIDING DEFINITIVE COMMENT BECAUSE CONCLUSION STATED REFTEL (B) NOT SUFFICIENTLY UNDERSTOOD AND MISSION NOT AWARE DETAIPJ PROPOSED INDONESIA SCHEME.

2 3. BELIEVE THIS ALLUDES TO FIFY FRENCH FARM TRACTORS PROCURED BY GVN FOR 1972 PROGRAM UNDER A FRENCH LOAN AND TO EMERGENCY PROCUREMENT OF BLANKETS FOR THE REFUGEE PROGRAM. BECAUSE OF 1972 NVA OFFENSIVE, UTILIZATION THESE TRACTORS DELAYED; NINE REMAIN AT THE CLA WAREHOUSE. THE MSW PROCURED 50,000 BLANKETS LOCALLY FOR RESERVE STOCKS AND TO REPAY THOSE BORROWED FROM THE RD CADRE STOCKS AT THU DUC. AT TIME OF CODEL VISIT, THERE WERE ABOUT 7,700 RD CADRE BLANJTS REMAINING IN THE CLA WAREHOUSE, AVAILABLE FOR RD CADRE AS NEEDED. ALL PROCUREMENT FOR GVN MINISTRIES EXCEPT DEFENSE IS DONE BY CLA. WHILE SOME DUPLICATION OF STOCKS HAS BEEN DETECTED, IT HAS BEEN EXCEPTION RATHER THAN RULE.

2 4. (A) ADVISORY RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL POLICE (NP) TERMINATED WITHIN 60 DAYS AFTER CEASE- FIRE. AID SUPPORT TO NP FOR REMAINDER OF FY 73 CONSISTS OF PARTICIPANT TRAINING AND NON- MILITARY COMMODITY SUPPORT; FOR FY 74 DOD WILL PROVIDE ALL COMMODITIES AND AID ONLY PARTICIPANT TRAINING. ASSUMING JOINT STATE/ AID/ DOD APPROVAL, THIS SPLIT- FUNDING ARRANGEMENT COULD BE CONTINUED. (B) FORMER NP TELECOM PROJECT BEING INTEGRATED INTO CENTRAL TELECOM DIRECTORATE SERVING ALL CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. JOINT AID/ DOD FUNDING SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO MEET BROADENED PROJECT OBJECTIVES.

B. RE PARA 2, REFTEL (A), MISSION RECOMMENDS PARAS 7, 8 AND 13 OF REFTEL (B) REMAIN CLASSIFIED BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE REACTION OF POTENTIAL DONORS.

C. AID/ W MAY WISH PROJECT INFORMATION IN A.6. ABOVE CONCERNING IBRD AND CONSULTATIVE GROUP UNTIL PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE. DAO SUGGESTS AID/ W CHECK WITH DOD ON CLASSIFICATION INFO PROVIDED IN A.14. ABOVE. OUR ASSESSMENT ON NEED FOR CONTINUED U. S. ASSISTANCE (SAIGON 222 UNCLASSIFIED).
WHITEHOUSE

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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O SAIGON
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